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Fascism: emergence and prevention

Material for discussing fascism



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The cover image shows a photo of the demonstration against the right-wing forces and for an active peace policy on April 29, 1972 in Bonn, in which members of all democratic forces took part.



Published by the Presidium of the Associations of Those Persecuted by the Nazi Regime, Association of Antifascists Editor: Peter C. Walther, cover design: Peter Altmann, Frankfurt/Main. Published as issue 4 of the texts on democratization, anti-fascist workbooks from Röderberg-Verlag in Röderberg-Verlag GmbH Frankfurt am Main, Schumannstrasse 56. All rights reserved by Röderberg-Verlag. 1972. Print: Fuldaer Verlagsanstalt.

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Issue 4 of the texts on democratization

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Dr. Kurt Gossweiler

On the nature and function of fascism

Material for discussing fascism

The question of the nature and function of fascism and neo-fascism is becoming increasingly important in practical terms. The focus of the discussion is the Marxist-Leninist analysis of fascism, as it was given in its most concentrated form in 1935 at the Seventh World Congress of the Communist International. Almost all bourgeois fascism "theories" are directed against their determination of the connection between finance capital and fascism, starting with the various variants of the "totalitarianism" template up to the sophisticated fascism apologia of Ernst Nolte. In contrast to these reactionary theories, Reinhard Kühnl says in his works on fascism straight to the goal, the close connection between the Lord of capitalism and the rise of fascism and to uncover and work out the danger of fascism that still exists in the Federal Republic. In the fight against the reactionary bourgeois theories of fascism, we see Reinhard Kühnl as an ally, with whose theory of fascism we agree on numerous points. But it is precisely for this reason that we believe it is necessary to engage in friendly criticism of theses that, in our opinion, do not yet get to the core of the matter or that carry the risk of leading away from this core. (We are primarily drawing on the work of R. Kühnl: Fascism attempt at a definition, in issue 12 of 1968 of the *Blätter für deutsche und internationalpolitik*.) We are aware of the fact that before the Marxist-Leninists The task is to bring their analysis of fascism up to date, taking into account the enormous wealth of histo

ric material that has accumulated since 1935. After all, it can already be said that this huge wealth of facts has repeatedly confirmed and reinforced the basic statements of the fascism analysis given by Dimitroff in 1935.

I. Imperialism and Fascism

1. Fascism is the ultimate consequence of the Imperialism. The "drive for reaction and violence" inherent in Imperialism is the era of finance capital and monopolies, which everywhere carry the drive for domination and not for freedom. Reaction across the board, regardless of the political system, extreme escalation of the situation contradictions in this area too - that is the result of these tendencies."¹

The monopoly is pushing for sole control in economic and political areas. The urge for autocracy arises from the objective compulsion to achieve not only average profits, but also monopoly profits, in order to secure the accumulation necessary for survival in competition. The monopoly profits are achieved primarily: a) by increasing the exploitation of the working class, b) by inflating monopoly prices at the expense of all other classes and strata of the population, including the non-monopoly bourgeoisie, c) by redistributing national income across the state in favor of the monopolies.

Bourgeois democracy and bourgeois parliamentarism still leave limited opportunities for the working people and the non-monopolistic bourgeoisie to defend themselves against the increased exploitation and plunder by finance capital. That is why finance capital is striving to eliminate these possibilities by establishing its own political domination. "The political superstructure above the new economics, above monopolistic capitalism (imperialism is monopolistic capitalism) is this

¹ V. I. Lenin, *Imperialism as the Highest Stage of Capitalism*, hereinafter: Lenin, *Imperialism*, in: Lenin, Works, Vol. 22, Berlin 1960, p. 302.

Turn from democracy to political reaction. Democracy corresponds to free competition. The political reaction corresponds to the monopoly."²

Here lies the first root of fascism. This is where the offensive character of fascism comes from: the urge for reaction and violence is the result of the power of the monopolies, from which the striving for omnipotence naturally arises.

So it is not enough to simply associate fascism with capitalism; And it is not enough to view it as just an instrument for the defense of capitalism. Fascism can only be correctly understood as the fruit of capitalism that has entered its highest and final stage, that of imperialism. It not only has a defensive but also an offensive function.

2. However, as a political movement and as a form of rule, fascism did not enter the stage of world history at the same time as imperialism, but only after the First World War. The urge of imperialism for reaction and violence only took on fascist form in a certain historical situation. This situation is characterized above all by the entry of capitalism into the period of its general crisis. In contrast to the cyclical crises, the general crisis of Capitalism is a permanent crisis that affects all areas of the capitalist social order. It broke out with the First World War as a result of the extreme escalation of all the contradictions of capitalism. The victory of the socialist revolution in Russia in 1917 meant both confirmation and a sudden deepening of the general crisis: this victory proved that capitalism had entered its final phase, its death crisis, which, although it encompasses a historically long period, is its main characteristic. However, the decline of capitalism and the rise of

² W. I. Lenin, On a caricature of Marxism, in: Lenin, Works, Vol. 23, Berlin 1950, p.

34. ³ See Reinhard Kühnl, Fascism - attempt to define the term, in: Sheets for German and International Politik, issue 12/1968, p. 1260: "Its social function is to maintain capitalist property relations and the associated social privileges of the upper classes even when this system has fallen into crisis and the masses turn against it or threaten to turn against it."

Socialism is in alliance with all anti-imperialist forces in a bitter global class struggle between imperialism and the working class.⁴

The overthrow of the Russian bourgeoisie has shown the bourgeoisie of the whole world that the working class is indeed capable of defeating them, overthrowing capitalism and establishing a new order. The effect of this historical experience on the monopoly bourgeoisie was and is contradictory: on the one hand, it learned to value social democratic reformism, which had previously been viewed as incapable of government, as a protective wall against the revolution and incorporated it into its apparatus of power and oppression; on the other hand, their fear of revolution gave rise to the desire not only to contain the workers' movement but to destroy it, to make it forever impossible for the workers to unite and organize to fight for their interests; the effort to deprive the revolution of any chance by rendering the revolutionaries "harmless", i.e. through isolation or physical destruction.

The drive for reaction and violence inherent in imperialism acquires a new quality in the period of the general crisis of capitalism: it increases into a constant drive for the complete eradication of the revolutionary workers' movement. However, this is only a tendency that is expressed to varying degrees depending on the specific conditions in the individual imperialist countries. Imperialism creates the sharpest instrument for the desired destruction of the workers' movement in the fascist movements and with the establishment of fascist dictatorships. The main function of fascism is the violent, terrorist suppression and suppression of the workers' movement. In view of this function, it is justified and necessary to characterize fascism as the expression and result of the historical defensive into which capitalism found itself in the stage of its general crisis vis-à-vis socialism.

⁴ Further information on the general crisis of capitalism can be found in: Dictionary of the History of Germany and the German Workers' Movement, Vol. 1, Dietz Verlag, Berlin, pp. 37-41.

In Reinhard Kühnl's definition of fascism, there is no reference to the connection between the general crisis of capitalism and fascism. It must be missing - because Kühnl lacks the concept of the general crisis of capitalism; instead, Kühnl only speaks in general terms about the fact that fascism is needed by capital "when this system has fallen into a crisis." But only after capitalism has entered the stage of its general crisis does fascism arise, and only in this. At this stage, the imperialist bourgeoisie uses fascism as an emergency aid when its system has fallen into a crisis of a different kind, such as a cyclical economic crisis with a political crisis in its wake.

3. It would be a wrong conclusion to view fascism as merely a symptom and proof of the weakness of the bourgeoisie after establishing the connection between fascism and the historical defensive position of capitalism. We have already seen under point 1 that fascism also expresses the offensive drive of finance capital for autocracy. On the other hand, fascism is not the only defensive weapon of imperialism: the November revolution in Germany showed that its last line of defense against the socialist revolution is reformism, social democracy. German imperialism retreated behind this line when it faced the armed revolution bare-handed, without any possibility of violent, armed resistance. So not only the establishment of the fascist dictatorship, but also the transfer of government power to social democracy is an expression of the weakness, the defensiveness of the imperialist bourgeoisie against the working class, the revolution.

In this context, the question is what role the world economic crisis and the acute crisis of capitalism in Germany that emerged from it played in the transfer of power by monopoly capital to the Hitler fascists. According to Kühnl, it was this "crisis situation" that led to "the ruling power groups" (more precisely: the leading groups of the monopoly bourgeoisie) abandoning parliamentary, bourgeois-democratic forms of government

terrorist methods of rule were used. In contrast to Lenin's analysis of imperialism, Kühnl sees the bourgeois-democratic form of government as the normal form even under the rule of monopoly capital, which only "renounces" this form of government in an emergency and seeks refuge in fascism. The historical reality of the Weimaraners Republic, however, teaches something different: the bourgeois-democratic form of government was only extremely reluctantly accepted by the ruling finance-capitalist power groups in 1918/19 under pressure from the armed working masses, and not for all time, but only as long as no opportunity arose to get rid of them again. For them, this lax Weimar Republic was just an "intermediate empire", an emergency solution that should be replaced as quickly as possible by a "strong state" in which the rulers could once again be the absolute masters of the house, without having to take the masses of voters, parliaments and unions into account.

It was not the case that in 1932/33 they renounced the parliamentary form of government out of necessity because there was no other way out of the crisis, but rather it was the other way around: the leading circles of monopoly capital pushed ahead at the turn of the year 1932/33 the handover of power to the Nazi party for fear of otherwise missing the opportunity to finally put an end to the Weimar Republic. There is only one, but very conclusive, document: in the well-known confidential private correspondence "Deutsche Führerbriefe", which was published by leading major industrialists with Paul Silverberg at the helm, a series of articles appeared in numbers 85 and 86 (November 1st and 4th, 1932) under the heading: Jena or Sedan. What was meant was: defeat or victory in the war against the "Weimar System". It said: "There is now a chance to change the actual system, the relationship between the state and the economy... We today are finally ready to govern without social democrats... But... what has already been done to change the structure of our economic and socio-political system?... For the time being, we cannot get rid of the great concern that...

5 Kühnl, A. & O., p. 1260.

Once the crisis waters have drained away, everything will go back to how it once was in May of the 'system time'... It would have been a system change if the government had approved the loosening of tariffs and wage reductions and the economy had then pushed through both in free play and balanced a system that was appropriate to the economy. The meaning of the crisis would have to be for entrepreneurship, this system... to get rid of... In these economic times you will never be able to get rid of it. The recent increase in social benefits also indicates, as an anticipation of economic developments, how the apparatus will function again in the economy. Sedan or Jena?... Drawing on the crisis and its strength to cleanse and reorient or muddle along from one day to the next with the sure certainty that after a year and a day the old drama will start again? That is also the epoch-making question for the economy.

Two days after the "Leader's Letters" with these sentences were published, the Nazis suffered a resounding defeat in the Reichstag elections on November 6th. They lost over 2 million votes. The NSDAP threatened to collapse as quickly as it had swelled. In the eyes of the monopoly masters, whose millions had financed the rise of the NSDAP, the situation was as follows: "The general aspirations of the men of business were to see a strong leader in power in Germany... When the NSDAP suffered its first setback on November 6, 1932, ... support from the German economy became urgent."⁶ This support did not become particularly urgent because the proletarian revolution was just around the corner, i.e. the power of monopoly capital would have been directly threatened. What the monopoly masters feared was the return of the "old theater", i.e. the return to parliamentary democracy, because this would have jeopardized their domestic and foreign policy objectives. Internally, out of a desire for profit, they wanted to freeze wages at the hunger level reached during the crisis even in the coming economic upswing; for this they needed a political reform

⁶ Statement by the banker Kurt von Schröder, in: *Anatomy of War*, Berlin 1969, Doc. 17, p. 98.

Tarian democracy was no longer able to realize its intentions and achieve its goals.

4. Who is meant when the Marxist-Leninists speak of the most reactionary, chauvinistic and imperialist elements of finance capital as the bearers of the fascist dictatorship?

The most reactionary and war-pushing elements of finance capital are naturally the most powerful and leading, the main groups of monopoly capital. These include the big banks and large corporations from mining, heavy industry, chemical and electrical industries and other areas, i.e. the industrial component of what we today call the "military-industrial complex". It is these elements of finance capital that primarily raise fascism and bring it to power; they determine the policies of the fascist dictatorship. This in no way means that the fascist dictatorship is not also in the interests of the other elements of finance capital, for example from the consumer goods industry. Of course, the monopolists of the textile industry or the heads of the cigarette companies have no objection to the unions being broken up, the right of the workers to form coalitions being abolished and the employers being turned into "managers" with unlimited power over the "followers"; nor are they opponents of the introduction of compulsory military service or of rearmament and the course for expansion. But under the fascist dictatorship they have even fewer opportunities to defend their specific interests against the leading monopolists of the military-industrial complex than in a parliamentary democracy.

The fire of the bourgeois monopoly apologists, the liberalizing authors as well as the extreme reactionaries, has always been directed against the Marxists' definition of fascism. Karl Dietrich Bracher, for example, writes in his book "The German Dictatorship" published in 1969: "Here, too, Hitler was anything but an instrument of the capitalists... the co-operating experts and economists were instruments and objects, not subjects of this policy."¹⁰ Kühnl wants how

¹⁰ Karl Dietrich Bracher, *Origin, Structure, Consequences of National Socialism*, Cologne-Berlin, 1969, p. 168.

his work, against the acquittal of the "upper classes". But due to inconsistency and probably also insufficient knowledge of the facts, he also includes in his attempt to define the concept of fascism a particularly sophisticated variant of the relief of monopoly capital, namely Bonaparti's, which goes back to August Thalheimer's theory. In a direct polemic against Dimitroff's definition of fascism at the VIIIth World Congress, Kühnl writes: "Fascism by no means means the direct rule of any group of capital." 11

Neither Dimitroff nor any other Marxist ever said that fascism was the "immediate" rule of financial capital. The word "immediate" is entirely at Kühnl's expense. The Marxists were and are not at all concerned with the question of whether fascism is direct or indirect, indirect or immediate rule, but with the question of whose rule it is, with the question of its class character. It is precisely because this dictatorship is not the direct rule of the monopoly bourgeoisie that the class character of this dictatorship can be misunderstood and falsified. The Marxist definition, as can be clearly seen from Dimitroff's statements, is directed against social democratic, Trotskyist and other "theorists" who derive the class character of the fascist dictatorship from the social origins of the Nazi leaders and describe it as the rule of the petty bourgeoisie or the lumpenproletariat over all Classes and strata including the monopoly bourgeoisie. In contrast, the Marxist analysis says: Despite the different social origins of the fascist chiefs, fascism is the power of finance capital. Kühnl should actually agree with this, as he has admittedly less clear and The same thing was said in unambiguous terms: "The social function of fascism is to maintain capitalist property relations and the social privileges associated with them ..." 12 This can happen if one considers how social functions come about in the reality of social life

11 Kühnl, a. a. O., p. 1263.

12 Kühnl, a. a. O., p. 1260.

men, mean nothing other than that the "upper classes" use fascism - and thus the fascist party and its leaders - as an instrument to secure their property and their privileges. But that is - only said in different words - also. But Kühnl accuses the communists of viewing the fascist state leadership "as a mere executive body, as an 'agent' and henchman of capital." 13

Here Kühnl used two words too many and thus the communist view distorted. Yes, the communists viewed and view the fascist state leadership as an executive body and as a stooge of the ruling class, the monopoly bourgeoisie. But "only as a mere executive body"? That assumes the idiotic view that this state leadership could only take action on direct orders or orders, that it had no scope for its own initiatives, no area of competence of its own. Communists never have such a view represent and could not represent it because it contradicts reality as well as the Marxist conception of the state and the Marxist base-superstructure theory. The state is the instrument of the ruling class, and the governments are the executors of this class, but they are Not only that, they are more, namely the "management committee" to represent the overall interests of this class, and that requires a wide scope for active action on its own initiative within the framework of these very interests. The German monopoly bourgeoisie could act as a "They gave their" plenipotentiary general" for terrorizing and seducing the people and for war preparation and unleashing the greatest possible scope for their own initiatives without any worries, since the Nazi leaders had made the goals of the "head of the company" entirely their own. For Kühnl, the Nazi leadership was not only more than a mere executive body, but also more than a "managing director" of monopoly capital, namely an indispensable arbitration body. According to Kühnl, a partial independence of the executive branch had to be accepted because the

13 Kühnl, a. a. O., p. 1262.

The various power groups within capital were no longer able to resolve their conflicts among themselves during the crisis and therefore needed an authority that was capable of making binding decisions. Only in this way could the entire system be stabilized*. 14 This is the main thesis of the so-called Bonapartism theory, which is intended to refute the Communist International's analysis of fascism from a pseudo-Marxist position. According to this theory, the fascist state power - Similar to Napoleon III and Bismarck at the time, who were able to temporarily play an arbiter role that seemed to be above the classes by balancing and playing off each other's various class forces - to become partially independent of monopoly capital and to become the arbiter of the factions in dispute of the monopoly bourgeoisie.

If the Bonapartism theory meant nothing other than this: that even in fascism there was of course the ever-observable tendency towards independence and the fact of the state being relatively independent from the groups of the ruling exploiting classes, then there would be nothing objectionable against it. But the point of this theory is that a particularly strong degree of independence of the fascist leadership clique from the ruling class is asserted as an essential characteristic of fascism. The proximity to the bourgeois fascism theories, according to which fascism is not the dictatorship of monopoly capital, but of the fascist party or its leader, cannot be overlooked.

The claim that the various groups of monopoly capital were no longer able to settle their conflicts and therefore had to appoint the Nazis as arbitrators does not stand up to scrutiny. Such a view takes appearance as reality, namely the fact that in order to build and maintain the leadership myth that is vital for the system, all external decisions must come from the omniscient, omnipotent and infallible leader.

German



English



In reality, however, the conflicts between the groups of the monopoly bourgeoisie were in principle resolved no differently than before, namely through the victory of that group whose conception promised to best and quickly approach the goals of German imperialism under the given conditions. Only the mode of resolving these conflicts had changed fundamentally: the fascist dictatorship ensured that the public was completely excluded and the image of the "national community standing unanimously behind the leader" remained untouched. The Nazi leaders intervened in the decision itself when in general, usually not as party men, but as representatives of certain groups of monopoly capital in the party leadership. Significantly, Hitler himself usually refused to make a decision in such conflicts and limited himself to making it after it had been made sanction.

5. The relationship between the fascist party and state leadership and the monopoly bourgeoisie was decisively determined by the further development of state-monopoly capitalism. We call state-monopoly capitalism the growth of the power of monopolies with state power to form a unified mechanism of rule. Such a development inevitably arises from the transition of capitalism into its imperialist stage. State monopoly capitalism is developed, unfolded imperialism.

The immediate and deeper causes for the union of monopoly power with state power lie, firstly, in the attempt of the monopolies to occupy the state for themselves alone, to exclude the rest of the bourgeoisie from rule and to exclude all other classes and strata from exerting influence on the state; secondly, in the impossibility of maintaining the capitalist mode of production without state intervention, given the acute fundamental contradiction of capitalism (social production, but capitalist appropriation of products); thirdly, in the effort to bridge the discrepancy between political goals (e.g. world domination) and limited economic possibilities through concentration and central deployment of all forces. State-monopoly capitalism develops fastest and most powerfully where the power of the monopolies is particularly strong

the imperialist contradictions are particularly acute and threatening and where the goals of imperialism are in particularly stark contrast to its possibilities and resources. It is therefore no coincidence that during the First World War Germany became the country in which state-monopoly capitalism had developed more strongly than in any other imperialist country. The global economic crisis once again gave the strongest impetus to the development of state-monopoly capitalism in Germany. Without government intervention, a way out of the crisis could not be found. But the monopolies wanted to ensure that this intervention was carried out exclusively in their interests. From the very beginning, fascism was brought to power to ensure the exclusive functioning of the state in the interests of monopoly capital. The banker Kurt von Schröder said in his letter already quoted. This statement also includes this intention - albeit in a clause with sufficient clarity when he explained: Another common interest was the desire to put Hitler's economic program into practice, an essential point being that the economy should direct itself to solve the problems posed by the political leadership.* 13 The expansion of the state monopolistic system in the fascist dictatorship also took place under the slogan of "self-management of the economy". Its characteristic was that the business associations, under the leadership of the monopolists, were transformed into state organs or institutions under public law with state powers and economic life was, like never before, directly led by representatives of finance capital, and conversely, the state, like never before, controlled economic processes controlled. The development of state-monopoly capitalism under the fascist dictatorship led to an unprecedentedly close, in-depth fusion of monopoly power and state power. This process did not increase the relative independence of the state, but rather reduced it.

At the same time, however, opposite tendencies also emerged in the fascist dictatorship. There were different options for this.

* Schröder, a. a. O., p. 95.

those causes that were rooted in the general contradictions of imperialism and in the specific contradictions of the fascist dictatorship. Just one of these contradictions should be pointed out here: the fascist leadership was not only entrusted with the task of creating a clear path for monopoly capital to pursue profit, but also of creating a quiet hinterland for the predatory wars of German imperialism, a second one in 1918 not to be allowed again. Both tasks were essentially mutually exclusive.

The fact that the "pacification" of the hinterland took place primarily through terror and intimidation with the help of a tremendously bloated repressive apparatus resulted in an incomparably greater weight of this political apparatus and its functionaries than under a bourgeois parliamentary system of rule. There were inevitable collisions of interests between this apparatus and its specific function and purely profit-oriented interests, but in the end the interests of the monopolies always came out on top on the basis of the determining overall interest of the monopoly bourgeoisie.

II. Class character and mass basis of fascism

As already shown, the class character of fascism is determined neither by the social origins of the fascist leaders nor by the social composition of the fascist parties and their supporters, nor by the programs and slogans with which fascist propaganda seeks to gain mass support. Its class character, like that of any other political force, is determined solely by its politics, that is, by the position it takes in the class struggle between proletariat and bourgeoisie, between the popular masses and monopoly capital. We saw that the fascist parties surpass all other parties of big business in terms of hostility to the people and disregard for national interests, because they protect the interests of the most reactionary even more brutally and to the utmost consequences circles of finance capital.

Some authors argue against this statement that a party that led German imperialism to defeat can hardly be described as representing the interests of the imperialist bourgeoisie. The English historian Tim Mason¹ formulates this objection as follows: 'One can detect a fundamental lack of conformity between political calculation and economic management in National Socialist Germany... Hitler (knew)... only one political rule: *va banque*... This policy... However, there was a lack of any even indirect reference to the needs of social reproduction. This can be seen from the fact that the expansionist objective bore no relation to Germany's economic potential; that this objective in itself was unreal... and was bound to lead to defeat... But beyond that, *va banque* is not a maxim of monopolistic economics: The large company cannot afford to take such risks at such a rapid pace - nor does it need them... The *Va Banque* policy was demonstrably not an adequate superstructure (of the monopoly economic base): its legacy consisted of rubble and ashes - and a sustained defeat of independent German imperialism.'¹

The logic of this argument is astounding. Because the imperialist bourgeoisie is only interested in victorious wars, lost wars cannot be attributed to them! However, Mason must be credited with consistency: Since, according to his theory, only the fascist leadership was to blame for Germany waging a war for unreal goals, there must have been a possibility for German imperialism of a successful outcome to the Second World War. Mason comments: It would be all too easy to retrospectively design an imperial program for the Germany of 1938-39 that would have granted lasting political and economic dominance across Europe, which could then have been consolidated and further expanded. There were approaches to this... In the specific situation in Germany at the end of the 1930s... should have been

¹ Tim Mason, *Primacy of Industry? A Response*, in: *The Argument*, Issue 47, July 1998, p. 195 f.

"A more cautious policy would serve imperialist interests better in both the long and short term."²

Imperialist Germany's twice attempted and twice failed attempt at world power should have been enough for Mason to realize that the causes of the outbreak of war and of the defeat lie deeper than the will of those in power, namely the nature of German imperialism - who periodically feels like an economic giant but politically disadvantaged and whose extreme greed for conquest and rapacity is coupled with a notorious inability to realistically assess the balance of power. The fascist character of German imperialism's warfare in the Second World War is explained precisely by these peculiarities of German imperialism. It led German imperialism to defeat not because fascism did not meet its needs, but precisely because it met them completely. That is why it was also the "adequate superstructure" over the monopolistic base of imperialist Germany in the phase of preparation, unleashing and conduct of the Second World War. The fact that this war was lost was not primarily due to the fascist leadership, but rather because that a war for world domination, no matter which imperialist power it is waged by, is deeply anachronistic in the era of liberation of all peoples from imperialist oppression, in the era of the transition from capitalism to socialism, and is linked to the new balance of power the world must fail, as is currently being demonstrated before all our eyes by the defeat of US imperialism in

Venezuela.

Mason's argument can be found - in a weaker form and without Mason's ultimate acquittal of German monopoly capital from responsibility for the crime of the Second World War - also with Reinhard Kühnl when he formulates: "The astonishing fact that it happened again and again can be explained with the theory of the partial independence of the fascist executive to measures ge

² Ibid., p. 196 f.

came that - seen from the rationally understood interest of the system - had a dysfunctional effect... Here (in the extermination measures against the European Jews . K.G.) the irrational ideology of fascism triumphed over all objective necessities."³

It cannot be explained here in detail why the "final solution" was as much an imperialist as a fascist "irrationality", which was by no means in an insoluble contradiction to the "objective necessities" of the warfare of the fascist German imperialism. The fundamental solution to the problem lies in the inconsistency of the situation of German imperialism, which inevitably gave rise to contradictory interests of this very imperialism, the consideration of which therefore seemed both "functional" and "dysfunctional". On the one hand, members of the conquered peoples were an almost inexhaustible reservoir of manpower. But they were also an equally inexhaustible reservoir for the anti-fascist resistance and liberation struggle of these peoples. From the point of view of supplying the armaments industry with manpower, the mass murder of able-bodied Russians was important, Ukrainians and Poles "dysfunctional"; But from the point of view of the impossibility of permanently controlling 400 million Europeans, including almost 200 million Soviet citizens, by 70 million Germans, a policy of - to speak with Field Marshal von Reichenau - merciless extermination of foreign insidiousness... and thus securing the life of the German Wehrmacht in Russia"⁴, i.e. the systematic genocide, is by no means "dysfunctional", but an imperative necessity. This is not said as a sufficient explanation for the fascist policy of exterminating Jews - a number of other factors also played a role here; but these The explanations make it clear how fundamentally wrong the undialectical application of the concept of "Dysfunctionality" and the conclusions derived from it .

³ Kühn, a. a. O., p. 1263.

⁴ From the order of Field Marshal von Reichenau on the conduct of the troops in the eastern area" dated October 10, 1941. ||

statements about the alleged triumph of "fascist ideology" over the interests of the monopoly bourgeoisie. Wherever fascism has so far managed to gain a significant mass base, it has predominantly been made up of the urban and rural petty bourgeoisie. It was from these layers that he mainly recruited his terrorist gangs and his masses of voters, on the basis of which monopoly capital in Germany was able to "legally" carry out the transition to fascist dictatorship. The attraction of fascism for workers proved and continues to be small in comparison; only the marginal sections of the working class, its most politically backward elements or elements debased by years of unemployment, joined the NSDAP in Germany in the years before 1933. Of the 14 million voters who voted for the NSDAP at the time, only two million were workers. The Nazi party grew exclusively at the expense of the other bourgeois parties and through the votes of previous non-voters:

	1928	July 1932
NSDAP	0,810 Mill.	13,700 million
DNVP	4,400 Mill.	2,100 million
DVP	2,700 million	436 million
DGP (German State P.)	1,500 million	9,371 million
Economic Party	1,300 Mill.	0,146 million
SPD	9,100 million	7,900 million
KPD	3,200 million	5,200 million

The two workers' parties, KPD and SPD, increased their combined vote share from 12.3 to 13.1 million, with a shift in votes from the SPD to the KPD. The fascists did not succeed in breaking into the ranks of the German working class before 1933. But in doing so they had not mastered the very task that the big bourgeoisie expected them to solve in the first place and which the fascists had set themselves as their goal when they founded their party. In the Reichswehr courses that Hitler completed as an "education officer" in Munich in 1919, he had heard again and again from various superiors that the main thing for Germany's rise was to wrest the German worker away from international Marxism

to "nationalize" him. The Reichswehr officers pointed out to Hitler one of the most pressing problems facing the ruling class. The First World War had taught the German imperialists and militarists in particular that one of the most important factors in waging war is the attitude of the working class, which in war is not only able to stop armaments production, but also has weapons in its hands that it can turn around. The ruling class's dream was therefore a "workers' party" that was even better able than the social democracy to fill the workers with hurray patriotism and chauvinism, to eradicate every trace of class struggle thinking and internationalism and to train them so that their guns only point at the... In the direction desired by the bourgeoisie, the Reichswehr leadership in Bavaria saw an organization with which this dream could perhaps become reality. General Ritter von Epp reported with full satisfaction in December 1922 in a memorandum to the Reichswehr leadership: "The national forces that had been awakened in the bourgeois and rural circles under the Kahr government have gained strength in the workers' circles through Hitler's national socialist movement strong allies." In the years of the global economic crisis, these hopes were revived again; the German national leaders around Hugenberg, for example, conceived a division of labor in which the NSDAP was to have the task of converting "socialists of an international mindset into socialists of a national mindset "to re-educate", while the DNVP itself wanted to "collect national, but at the same time private-sector forces". According to the intention of the most reactionary circles of monopoly capital, the NSDAP was supposed to fulfill a dual function: it was supposed to destroy the organized labor movement with open terror, but at the same time it was supposed to offer the workers who had become politically homeless a new political "home," i.e. social democracy as the mainstay of the bourgeois order in the working class. In the already quoted entrepreneur=

5 Heinrich Bennecke, *Hitler and the SA*, Munich and Vienna 1962, p. 46.

In the correspondence "Deutsche Führerbriefe", this intention was expressed quite openly. In numbers 72 and 73 of September 16 and 20, 1932, an article appeared under the heading: "The social reconsolidation of capitalism - (From social democracy to National Socialism)".⁵, whose author was known by Alfred Sohn-Reithel after almost 40 years. For us, it is unimportant what Sohn-Reithel says today was his intentions back then. What is crucial is that this article developed a concept of the replacement of social democracy by the Nazi fascists, which the editors of the monopoly capitalist information and self-understanding organ unconditionally supported. It said: 'The possibility of a liberal social constitution of monopoly capitalism is conditioned by the existence of an automatic mechanism of division of the workforce. A bourgeois regime that is interested in a liberal social constitution must not only be parliamentary in general, it must be based on social democracy and leave social democracy with sufficient achievements: a bourgeois regime that destroys these achievements must be social democracy and Those who sacrifice parliamentarism must find a replacement for social democracy and move on to a bound social constitution . The process of this transition passes through . . . the acute danger stage that with the loss of these . . . achievements, the mechanism of division of the workers based on them ceases to be effective, and therefore the workers slide in the direction of communism and bourgeois rule takes its place The limit of the state of emergency of a military dictatorship is approaching... Rescue from this abyss is only possible if the division and bonding of the workforce... succeeds in a different, direct way. This is where the positive possibilities of National Socialism lie.'

There was complete agreement between the ideas of the monopoly bourgeoisie and those of the Nazi leadership about the tasks of the NSDAP with regard to the working class. hit

⁵ Alfred Sohn-Reithel, The Social Reconsolidation of Capitalism (September 1932). A comment after 38 years, in: Karsbuch 21, Berlin 1970, p. 23 ff.

He knew what was expected of him and he promised not to disappoint those expectations. In a secret elaboration entitled "The Path to Resurrection, sent to his powerful patron Emil Kirdorf and intended for dissemination in Kirdorf's circles," Adolf Hitler had stated: "The National Socialist movement continues to recognize this as the most essential prerequisite for solving this problem: Task and for the formation of a unified national body the complete integration of the so-called fourth estate into the national community. It wishes that these millions of our national wealth be taken out of the hands of their current international, mostly non-German seducers and leaders and their full integration within the framework of the nation and the state." And when Hitler was confronted by Hindenburg on November 19, 1932 about the participation of the Berlin NSDAP in the transport workers' strike, he declared: If I had stopped my people from taking part, if only the strike had taken place, I would have lost my supporters in the workforce; That wouldn't be an advantage for Germany either.

* The fascists' tricks of deception did not catch on with the workers. The "Deutsche Führerbriefe" wrote disappointedly about the outcome of the state elections in Saxony on June 27, 1930: The gains of the National Socialists will be not cut out from the social democracy and the communists, but from the bourgeois parties. Anyone who still thought that National Socialism... Decimate socialism and communism, must correct his opinion.

* This failure of the fascists was no coincidence. Fascism should and wants to, but cannot, take over the role of social democracy as a bourgeois workers' movement. Because it would then have to act like social democracy at least represent the day-to-day interests of the workers and organize the workers into unions to achieve the most favorable conditions possible for the sale of labor power because of the antagonistic class antagonism between Bour-

7 Henry Ashby Turner, Jr., Hitler's Secret Pamphlet for Industrialists, 1927, in: *The Journal of Modern History*, Vol. 40, No. 3, September 1968, p. 362. 8 Kurt Goldsecker/Karl Dietrich Brachert, "Dissolution of the Weimar Republic", in *Journal of History*, 3/1958, p. 551.

geoisie and proletariat are the indispensable minimum prerequisite for the existence and functionality of a bourgeois workers' party. But fascism has been a mortal enemy of the trade union and every class organization of the proletariat from the very beginning. This is precisely why he receives the support of the most aggressive elements of monopoly capital. From the very beginning of its existence, its self-imposed task has been to intimidate organized labor through terror and to paralyze its willingness to fight against capital. Organized labor therefore inevitably recognizes fascism as its enemy, which binds it hand and foot. Wants to hand over capital by fighting and threatening to destroy their only weapon, their organizations. The entire history of fascism has proven that it can stick the label "socialist" and "worker's party" on itself, but it cannot represent the interests of the workers, not even within the narrow framework of social democracy. Monopoly capital has drawn an insurmountable limit to the fascist parties: they only have the right to exist and the possibility of existence as a weapon of destruction against the workers' movement, not as a nationalist-tinged section of the workers' movement. Social democracy and communists competed.

The irreconcilable hostility towards any form of proletarian class organization is therefore an essential characteristic of fascism. Incidentally, this is also the explanation why social democracy can never be the bearer of a fascist dictatorship; because it ceases to be social democracy when it ceases to represent the daily interests of the workers within the framework of the bourgeois order (and in the interest of maintaining this order!). Therefore, the communists' labeling of social democracy as social fascism was not only tactically but also theoretically wrong. However, it is enough to remember the misdeeds of a Noske, the bloodbath caused by the Social Democrats on May 1, 1929, the constant "no" of the Social Democratic leaders to the anti-fascist united front, their hate-filled incitement against the Soviet Union and their simultaneous willingness to communicate with the Nazi fascists (Leipart!) in order to understand that there are many, all too many facts of social democratic politics

There were leaders who provoked and admitted such a designation seemed to justify. The reference to the theoretical content. The feasibility of the term "social fascism" is even more so today more necessary than Trotskyist and other ultra-left elements portray the SPD as the most dangerous fascist force in the Federal Republic, which can only be of use to the truly fascist and pro-fascist forces. Wherever fascism gained a mass base, it recruited ahead Acquisition of political power, especially from social groups with a middle-class mentality: from small owners (craftsmen, small business owners, farmers) and groups with a consciousness of advancement (employees, civil servants), who are equally determined to maintain their threatened...middle-class position to defend the lower social classes.⁹⁰ This description of the fascist mass base, which comes from Kühnl, is largely correct, but requires some additions.

If it were the case that the petty-bourgeois classes believed their "middle-class" position was threatened only by "the lower social classes", i.e. the proletariat, it would be completely incomprehensible why they did not remain with the bourgeois parties to which they had previously been loyal performed. What is historically new, however, is the dawning realization among these classes that it is precisely big capital that most directly threatens and questions their existence as small owners. World War I, inflation and the global economic crisis meant repeated brutal expropriation of these classes; But there could be no doubt that the expropriators were not the workers, but the war and inflation profiteers, the big banks and industrial monopolies. As a result of these experiences, a basic anti-capitalist mood spread among large parts of the urban and rural petty bourgeoisie, which made them look for a way out beyond capitalism. However, they were looking for a way out that would save their existence from both the real danger of expropriation by big capital and the supposed suggested danger of expropriation by socialism. This stage of the political maturation process of the middle classes

⁹⁰ Kühnl, a. a. O., p. 1261.

was characterized by new insights while retaining persistent old prejudices. In view of the new insights, the arts of seduction previously used by the bourgeois parties were no longer sufficient. The old template of defending good capitalism, which supposedly gives free rein to the hard-working, against evil socialism, in which the lazy parasitize at the expense of the hard-working, no longer worked. It was a consequence and at the same time an expression of the general crisis of capitalism that, after the working class, the middle classes in many countries now also, if not fully recognized, at least emphatically felt, and consequently accepted capitalism as an outdated social order that no longer corresponded to their interests. Defense of capitalism could only be formed against their will and under anti-capitalist solutions.

However, none of the old bourgeois parties could solve such a task, but only a party whose program and propaganda gave credible expression to the "anti-capitalist longing" of these layers.

Fascism arose from the need of monopoly capital to destroy the workers' movement, eradicate socialism and establish its own absolute omnipotence. Because capitalism compromised the majority of the population, fascism was forced to adopt an anti-capitalist and "revolutionary" demeanor. "Fascism strives for the most unrestrained exploitation of the masses, but approaches them with a sophisticated anti-capitalist demagoguery, takes advantage of the deep hatred of the working people against the rapacious bourgeoisie, against the banks, the trusts and the financial magnates, and puts forward slogans which at a given moment are most tempting for the politically immature masses... Fascism... impresses these masses by the violence of its attacks against the bourgeois governments, by the irreconcilability of its behavior towards the old parties of the bourgeoisie. . . Fascism comes to power as a party of attack against the revolutionary movement of the proletariat. . . But he presents his rise to power as a 'revolutionary' movement against the bourgeoisie...."

10 Dvoretzky, a. a. O., S. 90 f.

The characteristics of the emergence of fascism listed here by Dimitroff are by no means accidental, are not primarily due to any characteristics or ideas of the fascist chiefs, but are shaped by the tasks for the solution of which monopoly capital needs and uses fascism the state of consciousness of the strata to which fascism appeals, ultimately the concrete class struggle situation.

It would, of course, be wrong to conclude from the fact that fascism finds its mass base primarily in the petty bourgeoisie that the petty-bourgeois middle classes are incurably predestined to succumb to fascist demagoguery. Their susceptibility to the seductions of fascism becomes less the richer their political experiences are and the more clearly the workers' movement proves itself to them as a unified political force and a reliable representative of their interests. However, this also means that overcoming their political backwardness and seduction through fascist demagoguery is made extremely difficult and inhibited when the social democracy as the governing party implements the anti-middle-class policies of finance capital and, in the "opposition", slows down the mass struggle against this policy sabotaged. In doing so, it supports the fascist agitation against "Marxism" as the supposed culprit for the ruin of the middle class. If and by sabotaging the unified struggle of the workers' parties against the fascist danger, it indirectly paves the way for fascism. But left-wing sectarianism also serves as an accomplice to fascism by turning socialism and the socialists into a terror for the citizens and compromising the workers' movement in the eyes of the working class's natural allies.

From what has been said it follows that the unity of action of the workers' organizations and a correct alliance policy of the workers' movement is the most important prerequisite for preventing fascism from finding a broad mass base in the petty bourgeoisie.

An important question is the problem of distinguishing fascism from other reactionary political movements and systems of rule. The answer to this question is also un

still controversial among Marxists. When answering this question, it seems necessary to me to distinguish between fascism as a political movement and fascism as a system of rule, i.e. between the fascist party fighting for power and the fascist dictatorship.

Fascism as a political movement

What is the difference between fascism and political movement and the other reactionary parties? If one compares the NSDAP and DNVP as the two right-wing parties in the Weimar Republic, then one must first emphasize what they have in common: Both have in common the will to destroy the workers' movement and to abolish the parliamentary system, to establish a national dictatorship, which holds down its opponents through the use of terrorist violence, prevents every struggle of the working class to improve its material and social situation - and of course especially for power - , gives the monopoly masters back their position as absolute rulers in their companies and with everything Force creates the conditions for the opening of a second round of the struggle for world domination by German imperialism

In terms of the goal, there was agreement on the most important points. It can therefore be said that the fascist system of rule in its essential core was also the goal of the DNVP.

Both also have a lot in common in their fighting methods and ideology: both were based on military formations (Stahlhelm, SA), which - apart from their function as an extension of the 100,000-man army of the Reichswehr - primarily played the role of Civil war guards to terrorize the workers and an instrument of power to be used • if necessary to establish and secure the "national dictatorship". The basic ideological equipment of both included the most unbridled anti-communism and nationalism, the cult of violence and the glorification of war as well as anti-Semitism. Both fought the Weimar Republic with the same accusations and insults as "Jewified"

and Republic of the "November Criminals". These are all features that testify to the close relationship between the conservative reactionaries of the DNVP and the fascist NSDAP, a relationship that was also evident in the later merger of the DNVP and the NSDAP in the Harzburg Front and in the Brüning-Hugenberg cabinet.

In addition to these similarities, there were also unmistakable differences. With regard to the goal, they only concerned minor questions: the conservative German nationalists sought the establishment of the "national dictatorship" as a restored monarchy; the Nazi fascists wanted the "Führer state", although they wanted its realization within the framework of a monarchy only ornamental meaning should not be fundamentally rejected. (When the decision was finally made against the restoration of the monarchy in 1934, this was more due to "objective constraints" than to a clear will of the Nazi leaders.)

What was more important was that Hugenberg, as leader of the DNVP, hoped to play the leading role in the "national dictatorship" himself, which at the same time would have meant that the East Elbe Junkers not only retained the position they held in the Weimar Republic, but also significantly improved it - would have been strengthened. Those circles of monopoly capital, on the other hand, had a decisive influence on the NSDAP and they intended to further expand their own position of power, even at the expense of the Junkers, and in fact did so.

However, the most obvious differences between the DNVP and the NSDAP emerged in their methods of fighting the Weimar Republic and establishing the dictatorship.

The DNVP sought its mass support primarily in the Protestant, conservative, state-loyal bourgeoisie; it carried out propaganda that only offered those disappointed by the present and dissatisfied with it a return to the "good old days" of the Empire and anxiously avoided any adjustment to the "anti-capitalist longing" of the broad masses, for fear of the ghosts would call her not to let go. That's why she was never entirely comfortable with the Nazis' unscrupulous social demagoguery. What distinguished them from the Nazi fascists was their rigid adherence to conservative principles.

images in a time and under conditions where the utmost Reaction could only gain a mass base if it behaved radically and extremely revolutionary and presented himself as Bringer of a completely new, fairer world order. The new thing that distinguished fascism from the conservative reactionaries was, above all, that it addressed those strata that were slipping away from the influence of the old bourgeois parties and whose belief in the bourgeois order as the best of all worlds was shaken were; He accordingly combined the old national demagoguery with unscrupulous social, pseudo-socialist demagoguery. The combination of social-revolutionary masquerade with the most brutal violence, especially against organized workers, is what makes the appearance of the fascist parties unique in comparison to their conservative-reactionary cronies and competitors. Although the latter can hardly be distinguished from the fascists in terms of their goal, their method of fighting for this goal lacks precisely those elements that fascism added to the arsenal of the class struggle of the ruling class against the workers' movement and against democracy. One could therefore describe the conservative-reactionary direction and its organizations, such as the Pan-Germans, the German Nationals and the Stahlhelmers, as "semi-fascist". Their enormous importance for the emergence of fascism lies primarily in the fact, that they - and of course the circles of the ruling class behind them - are its progenitor, nurturing mother and most zealous promoters, without their material, organizational and idealistic support He would not get beyond the stage of being a cult. This can be demonstrated in both Italian and German fascism (particularly in the relationship between the Pan-Germans and the DNVP and the NSDAP).

Fascism as a system of rule

If fascism as a political movement can still be distinguished relatively reliably from the other reactionary parties and tendencies due to the above-mentioned characteristics, this will be a great deal for fascism as a system of rule

more difficult. Between parliamentarism and a clear fascist dictatorship there are numerous variants of regimes that are no longer parliamentary, whose membership or non-affiliation to the type of fascist state is controversial and difficult to decide. Anyone who, like Kühnl, sees fascism as an independent mass movement that emerges and grows independently of monopoly capital, with which the leading groups in the economy, military and bureaucracy in the fascist dictatorship entered into an alliance as an equal and equal force, will be disappointed. The existence of this mass movement and its supposed independence from the "upper classes" are considered to be an essential feature of the fascist dictatorship and therefore logically only consider Mussolini's Italy and Germany from 1933 to 1945 to be considered a fascist dictatorship.

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Apart from the fact that such a view misinterprets the relationship between monopoly capital and the fascist movement and comes close to the bourgeois exculpation "theories" that describe the policy of German imperialism between 1933 and 1945 as a policy exclusively of the "independent" and all-powerful Nazi leadership, it follows that an acute danger of the establishment of a fascist dictatorship only exists where there is a strong fascist mass movement. It is therefore oriented one-sidedly towards the fight against the fascist groups and parties, instead of primarily towards the fight against the focus of all fascist efforts, the reactionary circles of finance capital. And it also completely ignores the fact that the smaller the prospects of winning over one's own fascist mass base, the greater the danger that the imperialist alliance systems led by the USA will impose a fascist regime on those peoples who prepare to tread the path of an anti-imperialist revolution.

Those who, on the other hand, see the fascist mass movement as just one means among others that monopoly capital uses to achieve the goal of its open, terrorist dictatorship

The decisive feature of the fascist dictatorship will be the open terrorism of the exercise of power by the monopoly bourgeoisie and will speak of a fascist dictatorship wherever such a rule has been established, even if it is not with the help of a fascist mass movement, but on something else. Ways, e.g. B. through a military coup (Greece), with the help of the high clergy (clerical fascism in Austria 1933 to 1938), through the conservative-reactionary, semi-fascist circles (monarcho-fascism, as was attempted in the Kapp Putsch in 1920) or with external support ("imported fascism in Franco-Spain, Greece, Latin American states) was installed. The decisive characteristics of a fascist dictatorship can then be seen in the following: the destruction of the legal organizations of the working class, especially the communist and trade union organizations; terrorist prosecution of all attempts to continue their illegal activities; isolation or physical destruction of the leading cadres of the labor movement and, if possible, all active anti-fascists; Elimination of parliamentarism and violent suppression of all opposition; Establishment of a regime of violence and arbitrariness by the state towards the citizens and one of the entrepreneurs and large landowners towards the wage earners and the working rural population; all of this in the interest and to implement the domestic and foreign policy goals of the leading circles of finance capital (including large landowners). Such a view of the fascist dictatorship assumes that, like any social phenomenon, it can appear in a variety of forms. At the VIIIth World Congress of the Communist International, Dimitroff formulated this idea as follows: The development of fascism and the fascist dictatorship take different forms in different countries, depending on the national characteristics and the international position of the country in question. In certain countries, especially where fascism does not have a broad mass base and where the struggle between individual groups in the camp of the fascist bourgeois themselves is quite strong, he does not immediately decide to do so

"To liquidate Parliament, and leaves the other bourgeois parties and also the Social Democrats a certain legality".¹² This was true, for example, in Italy until 1926. Dimitroff also did not rule out the possibility that fascism was at the moment of a particular intensification of its situation makes attempts to expand its base and, without changing its class nature, to combine open terrorist dictatorship with a gross falsification of parliamentarism."¹³

On the way to fascism

Of course, such a view does not mean that every regime that no longer represents a fully intact bourgeois parliamentarism should already be classified as a fascist dictatorship. Dimitroff generalized the experience, especially with German fascism, when he stated at the VIIth World Congress that "before the establishment of the fascist dictatorship, the bourgeois governments usually go through various stages and carry out a series of reactionary measures that lead to the rise to power of the fascist dictatorship. Prepare and directly promote fascism."¹⁴ As is well known, the German communists at times made the mistake of viewing the pre-fascist governments of Brüning and Papen as fascist dictatorships. This is not the place to go into the causes of this misjudgment. The complexity of answering the question correctly points out at which point the preparatory phase of a fascist dictatorship ends and the actual fascist dictatorship begins. What criterion or criteria are decisive for this? to be considered as such a criterion. However, the reference to the KPD ban in 1923 in the Weimar Republic and in 1956 in the Federal Republic shows that this criterion alone is not sufficient. A further criterion is the elimination of parliament and the ban on non-fascist bourgeois parties.

¹² Dimitroff, a. a. O., S. 88.

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ Ibid., p. 89.

But measured by this criterion, the fascist dictatorship in Italy would not have been established until 1926 and in Germany only in March or even June 1933. Such an approach ignores the fact that fascist dictatorships go through an evolution ; They have their initial phase, their "heyday" and their final phase, the phase of their decomposition. Therefore , there can be no doubt that the fascist dictatorship in Italy with the transfer of power to the Mussolini party on October 29, 1922 and in Germany with the January 30, 1933 began.

The beginning of a fascist dictatorship must therefore be seen as the handover of power to or the takeover of power by the most reactionary political forces, whose goal is to establish unrestricted tyranny to secure the interests of domestic, and in certain circumstances also of foreign, - monopoly capital set. These do not necessarily have to be fascist parties, but can also be military officers or leaders of conservative reactionary parties or even representatives of the high clergy. The view - which is also represented by Kühnl - that a tyranny based on the army and headed by a military or a military junta must in any case be distinguished as a military dictatorship from a fascist dictatorship is based on external forms, instead of the content of power and also ignores the fact that there are military dictatorships with very different content. The range of variations ranges from the military dictatorship of General Seeckt in 1923/24, which only temporarily and partially suspended the parliamentary system, to military dictatorships of the fascist type, such as that of the colonels in Greece. In any case, for the working class and all democrats it makes no significant difference whether their flayers, concentration camp guards and executioners are members of a fascist party or police officers and members of the army. Furthermore, the degree of terrorism can only serve as a criterion for a fascist dictatorship to a limited extent and within certain limits. It would be e.g. B. a big mistake, German fascism, the - as Dimitroff put it - the most reactionary variety of fascism 15, with its extermination camps

15 ibid., p. 87.

norm and to view everything that remains below this norm in terms of murderous bestiality as non-fascist. Fascism can be all the more cruel and terroristic the stronger its internal base is and the more it plays the role of the shock troop of the international counter-revolution ... , the initiator of a crusade against the Soviet Union"¹⁶. It must appear all the more terroristic the stronger it is Communist Party is anchored in the working class and the greater the discrepancy between the expansionist goals of fascist imperialism and its material possibilities and becomes apparent.

Fascism is therefore forced to adapt its appearance and ideology to the respective domestic and international situation. Therefore, it cannot be expected that in today's world, in which the balance of power has changed so much to the disadvantage of imperialism and the appeal of socialism even to the middle classes has increased tremendously, fascism will appear in its shape and form and with exactly the same slogans as in the twenties and thirties. What Dimitroff said about American fascism in 1935 appears very noteworthy and topical in this regard: 'The peculiarity of the development of American fascism is that at the current stage it mainly takes the form of opposition to fascism as a 'non-American,' current imported from abroad occurs. In contrast to German fascism, which appeared with anti-constitutional slogans, American fascism tries to pose as a fighter for the constitution and 'American democracy'.'¹⁷

¹⁷ In the Federal Republic we even find attempts to do so with the old fascist Otto Strasser to prepare the ground for new fascism under the flag of anti-fascism.

For the fight against fascism, what seems to me to be crucial in the current phase is the realization that every fascist danger has its origins in the rule of the monopoly

¹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷ Ibid., p. 121.

capital, that the safest prevention against any fascist danger is the suppression of the power of the monopoly bourgeoisie. Furthermore, Dimitroff's statements at the Seventh World Congress have lost none of their relevance: "Whoever does not fight against the reactionary measures of the bourgeoisie and against the growing fascism in these preparatory stages will not be able to prevent the victory of fascism. It promotes it much more." 18 One must not replace the necessary development of the mass struggle with fruitless arguments about the character of fascism "in general".

"The prevention of the victory of fascism depends above all on the combat activity of the working class itself, on the unification of its forces into a unified army fighting against the offensive of capital and fascism. The proletariat, having established its fighting unity, would paralyze the influence of fascism on the peasantry, on the urban petty bourgeoisie, on the youth and the intellectuals, would neutralize one part and bring the other to its side.

Secondly, this depends on the existence of a strong revolutionary party that will properly lead the struggle of the working people against fascism. A party that systematically calls on the workers to retreat from fascism and allows the fascist bourgeoisie to strengthen its positions - such a party inevitably leads the workers towards defeat.

Thirdly, it depends on the correct policy of the working class towards the peasantry and the urban petty bourgeois masses. These masses must be taken as they are and not as we wish them to be. They will only overcome their doubts and fluctuations in the course of the fight. Only if one shows patience in the face of their inevitable fluctuations and if the proletariat supports them politically will they rise to a higher level of revolutionary consciousness and activity.

18 Ibid., p. 102 ff.

Fourth, it depends on the vigilance and timely actions of the revolutionary proletariat. You can't let fascism take you by surprise. You can't let him take the initiative. He must be dealt decisive blows before he can gather his strength. He cannot be allowed to strengthen his position. You have to resist it at every turn where it appears. He must not be allowed to conquer new positions, as the French proletariat is successfully trying to do. These are the most important prerequisites for preventing the growth of fascism and its rise to power 11

Annotation:

Only after completing this revision of my paper was I able to view Kühn's latest publication, "Forms of Civil Rule", Hamburg 1971. In this new work, many of the weaknesses of his attempt at a definition from 1968, which were noted critically here, have been overcome. Kühn obviously deepened his understanding of Marxism by studying the works of Lenin and the works of Marxist authors. In the "Forms of bourgeois rule" the connection between imperialism, the general crisis of capitalism and fascism, which remained unmentioned in 1968, is worked out. Kühn now also sees the attitude of the petty bourgeoisie no longer as a one-sided defense against "below", but also as a search for liberation from the pressure of the monopolies. However, his idea of the relationship between fascism and the monopoly bourgeoisie still seems to me to be an overestimation of the degree of independence of fascism vis-à-vis the ruling class.

Reinhard Kühnl

Capitalism and Fascism

Theses on Kurt Gossweiler's "Material for the Fascism Discussion"

1. As Gossweiler himself states in his comment, his criticism of my interpretation of fascism refers to the status of the discussion in 1968. The attempt to define the term, published at the time in the "Blätter für deutsche und internationalpolitik", has now been intensively discussed. I processed the criticism in my last book (cf. *Forms of bourgeois rule: Liberalism and Fascism*, rororo aktuell 1971); through more precise and detailed formulation, through processing new empirical research and through modifying some theses that had proven to be problematic.

In the following I will therefore only deal with Gossweiler's criticism to the extent that it also applies to this book. The main issue under discussion is the "relationship between fascism and the monopoly bourgeoisie." Gossweiler's further claim that the attitude of the petty bourgeoisie was interpreted differently in 1968 than in 1971 is incorrect. It was already made clear then that "the petty bourgeois masses. Despite all the fear of socialist efforts, they also felt threatened by big capital. (p. 1262). If Gossweiler nevertheless claims that the attitude of the petty bourgeoisie was presented "one-sidedly only as a defense against 'below'", then it is reasonable to assume that he was only describing the short version of my theses at the beginning of the essay, but not the entire essay (This assumption is supported by a number of other symptoms.) The thesis of the double front position of the petty bourgeoisie against the working class and big capital occupies a central position in my interpretation;

German



English



I wrote a book in 1966 about the resulting anti-monopolistic tendencies in the NSDAP. (See The National Socialist Left 1925-1930, Meisenheim 1966.)

2. First of all, it must be emphasized that there is a high degree of agreement between my interpretation of fascism and that of Gossweiler. This agreement concerns first of all the social content of the fascist system: it was about securing the social rule of capital, destroying the workers' movement and tackling the imperialist program. What must be distinguished from this is the social basis of the fascist mass movement: it was largely recruited from the petty bourgeoisie. With the help of this movement it was possible to prevent the masses from turning to the left, to establish the fascist dictatorship, to suppress the workers' movement by terrorist means and to create a new mass base for the capitalist system after the collapse of the bourgeois parties.

So there is agreement on these basic questions. The differences begin when it comes to determining more precisely the causes of the success of the fascist movement and the power structure of the fascist system. Both problems are based on the question of how fascism relates to big capital and its most important representatives. And finally, there are different views on the question of what is special about fascism and how it differs from other reactionary forces.

3. First of all, on the question of the conditions for the rise of fascism. Here Gossweiler assumes a direct causal connection between the behavior of the ruling class and the success of fascism: the conservative-reactionary forces and thus of course the ruling circles behind them Class* - are the "ancestor, mother and most zealous promoters" of fascism, "without whose material, organizational and intellectual support it would not get beyond the stage of being a sect". In that of Gossweiler et al. The book "Germany from 1933 to 1939" wrote that the NSDAP was made up of "a small group of Mono

"polists, big and middle bourgeois and brought up" (p. 13). The causal relationship that actually exists between capitalists=Islam and fascism are understood here in an all-too-direct and personalistic-voluntaristic way, so that the proximity to conspiracy theories cannot be overlooked. In fact, this relationship must be seen more as a mediated and structural one: it was not the direct support of big capital that brought about the rise of fascism, but rather the economic crisis rooted in the capitalist system that drove the frightened masses, especially the proletarianized or proletarianized masses = middle classes threatened by social security, to fascism, which promised them social security and national prestige. Only when fascism had formed into a mass movement did the support of big business begin on a larger scale, which then of course further strengthened fascism's propaganda possibilities and accelerated its rise. The reason why fascism was able to gain so many supporters is because capitalism constantly produces authoritarian and irrational forms of thought and behavior and thus ideologically prepares the masses for fascism (if had).

Here lies another problem that has not yet been satisfactorily solved by Gossweiler and the GDR science: If one wants to find an explanation for the fact that the petty-bourgeois masses (and an - albeit small - part of the working class) did not follow the workers' parties, but rather themselves. To allow themselves to be so misled by fascism and used against their elementary interests, pointing out the fact of misleading and fascist demagoguery is not enough. Rather, what would be required is an analysis of the question of how the psychological mechanisms that make this manipulation possible work. Only from here would an effective counterstrategy be possible that would target these psychological dispositions, i.e. H. takes into account the difference between social situation and consciousness. Even if one considers the attempts at explanation by Wilhelm Reich, Erich Fromm and other social psychologists, who tried to make the results of psychoanalysis usable for Marxism, to be inadequate, one must nevertheless emphasize that they recognize the problem and make approaches to a solution.

Develop a solution that is in fact impossible without the categories of a materialistic social psychology.

4. It is undisputed that a fascist system can only be established if the relevant factions of the ruling class want and pursue it. But after the establishment of the fascist system, how is the relationship between big capital and the fascist party to be determined? According to Gossweiler, it is all about the "degree of independence of fascism vis-à-vis the ruling class". It is expressly made clear that the fascist state leadership has a "leeway for its own initiative", an "own area of competence", a "wide scope for active action based on its own initiative" within the overall interests of the ruling class. I want to go with Gossweiler. Don't argue about whether, as he claims, it was always seen that way by GDR science (there is enough evidence that the fascist executive was often portrayed as a mere executive organ of finance capital.) In fact Only this theory of the partial independence of political violence (as well as other phenomena of the superstructure) is compatible with the principles of dialectical social science. Anyone who sees political violence, law, and ideology as totally and directly determined by the ruling class in each case, falls into monocausal economics, which has little in common with Marxism.

As far as the "degree of independence" of the fascist state leadership is concerned, I have no reason to deviate from my interpretation as long as the examples I have mentioned have not been refuted. For example, in my opinion it is impossible to justify the murder of millions of Europeans The Jews can somehow be derived from the interests of the ruling class. This is where the independence of fascist irrationalism becomes clearest (although it remains undisputed that such ideologies as racism and anti-Semitism are produced by capitalism in its imperialist stage and usually as instruments of manipulation, function in the interests of the ruling class). It is no coincidence that when dealing with this question, Gossweiler's argument remains diffuse and indefinite.

5. The question of the conditions for advancement and the power structure of fascism must be decided according to historical-empirical criteria. The question of the political function of a scientific theory must first be asked separately. It is inadmissible to mix the empirical-historical question with tactical, political and moral considerations. Gossweiler's accusation that my theory of an alliance between the fascist party and big business is closer to bourgeois theories of the sole guilt of the fascists and the innocence of capital is therefore misplaced. Furthermore, it is illogical in itself, since my interpretation says that both alliance partners are equally responsible. One could rather accuse the representatives of the Dimitrov theory of acquitting the fascist state leadership because they see it only as the managing organ of finance capital. But - as I said - such political and moral disqualifications should be avoided in this controversy.

6. On the question of the specific characteristics of fascism and demarcation from other reactionary forces

Gossweiler's position is contradictory. On the one hand, he rightly states that what is qualitatively new about fascism lies precisely in the fact that it mobilizes masses for reactionary goals by mixing anti-capitalist elements into the conventional reactionary ideologies. On the other hand, he argues that any system that exhibits "open terrorism in the exercise of power by the monopoly bourgeoisie" should be described as fascist, even if it is based only on the police and military and not on a mass movement. In doing so, he gives the criterion with which fascism can be distinguished from other reactionary terrorist dictatorships in the period of developed capitalism, again this is unfortunate not only for scientific reasons - because the concept of fascism therefore loses its precision - but also for political reasons. Danger such as the existence of reactionary-terrorist military dictatorships must be combated with different strategies than the danger and existence of fascist dictatorships, because the techniques of rule of these systems differ considerably. There is a huge difference whether a system is based only on the executive apparatus or whether it has mass organizations that organize the entire society

satorically grasp and ideologically penetrate and thus bring about not only a permanent control of the masses, but also a broad acclamation by the masses. The argument that for democrats and socialists it makes no significant difference whether their abusers are members of a fascist party or police officers is below the theoretical level at which this discussion should be conducted. The victims of the Freikorps in Germany in 1919 or the French executive bodies in 1871 were treated no less cruelly; Should we therefore call all of this fascism?

7. Gossweiler's essay - like the interpretation of fascism in GDR scholarship in general - focused almost exclusively on German fascism. This is understandable in view of the diverse idealistic and personalistic ideologies of concealment that were devised by the historical sciences of the Federal Republic of Germany about the German past and that urgently needed a materialistic correction. But it also led to certain misjudgments of the bourgeois state, which can only be avoided by examining the developed capitalist society in all its versions and asking about its fascist tendencies. Then it turns out that Germany has special conditions in many respects. It was no coincidence that fascism only triumphed in Germany and Italy, while the bourgeois constitutional state was preserved in the other developed capitalist states. Even if one does not want to describe the bourgeois-democratic form of government as the "normal form" in monopoly capitalism, one can still say that, taken as a whole, one can say that, according to all experience, the ruling class usually prefers to govern with the help of the constitutional state - with the executive branch as strong as possible and the lowest possible effectiveness of democratic decision-making and control - and only resorts to fascist dictatorship if they believe they can no longer protect their fundamental interests otherwise (precisely because fascist irrationalism also contains risks for them).

8. I completely agree with Gossweiler on the question of the fight against authoritarian and neo-fascist tendencies

the presence. What is important here is to mobilize all forces that are not interested in fascism and to counter all forces that want to further restrict democratic rights and spread militaristic, anti-democratic and anti-communist ideologies. Without a doubt, the danger of fascism can only be finally averted when the soil that continually generates fascist tendencies no longer exists, i.e. when capitalism is replaced by a socialist democracy.

Reinhard Opitz*)

How do you fight fascism?

Theses on anti-fascist politics

Anti-fascist politics must not see its central task as combating an already established fascism, but must set itself the goal of preventing the establishment of fascism. Since fascism does not come out of nowhere overnight, preventing fascism here and now means fighting and blocking any developments towards fascism.

Answering the question: How do you fight fascism most effectively? requires the most comprehensive and reliable knowledge possible about the origins and nature of fascism. You have to recognize the danger in order to combat it effectively. That's why it's necessary to summarize the most important findings about the emergence of fascism here.

I. Nature of fascism

The essential characteristics of fascism are - in Dimitroff's summary and still valid definition - "the open terrorist dictatorship of the most reactionary, most chauvinistic, most imperialist elements of financial capital".

Fascism means replacing the bourgeois, formal democratic form of government with a violent and arbitrary regime for the terrorist implementation of domestic and foreign policy

* Based on the presentation of the same name by Reinhard Opitz at a conference of the working groups of young anti-fascists, compiled by P. C. Walther.

interests and goals of the leading circles of monopoly capital; means in particular the suppression and destruction of any opposition, especially the labor movement for the physical destruction of their cadres

Fascism as an established system of rule - that's what was said in the Theses on the concept of fascism* summarized - is a - and indeed the most violent - form of political rule of monopoly capital, which becomes relevant when the previous mechanisms of rule for monopoly capital fail or threaten to fail.

Fascism as an instrument for the terrorist implementation of the domestic and foreign policy goals of monopoly capital means that the fascist form of rule is not primarily (or not only) a reaction to the failure of previous forms of rule, but is primarily an action of monopoly capital. With fascism, monopoly capital enforces its interests and goals in the "purest" way, while with formally democratic forms of rule it is constantly under pressure to have to make concessions and compromises

II. Main forms of fascism

In general we have two main manifestations of fascism: firstly, with fascism based on a political mass movement, which establishes its dictatorship through a fascist movement, and secondly, with fascism based on a military apparatus, which aligns itself with the army or police of its own country (or one allied with it), imperialist power).

Preventive, that is, timely effective combating of fascism must take the possibilities of both forms into account. It must recognize the mechanisms by which monopoly capitalist society produces one form of fascism and the other. It must recognize the different conditions that explain the differences in both forms and at the same time recognize the unity of their causes in order to come up with a realistic counter-strategy.

* See Reinhold Goltz: Theses on the concept of fascism in two fascisms in: The Federal Republic of Germany: Antifascist workbook No. 1, Rotenburg (Jung) Frankfurt a.M., 1971.

The different manifestations do not result from different stages of economic development, just as fascism as a whole is not the political phenomenon of just a certain phase of the monopoly capitalist economy. It is not recession or open crisis that "cause" fascism. Since the transition from capitalism of free competition to monopoly capitalism, fascism can occur in one form or another at all stages of development. Monopoly capitalism is merely the general basic condition of fascism, without which would not be possible because no other social force is objectively interested in a fascist regime.²

The concrete forms in which fascism is realized and thus its concrete possibilities for realization arise from the concrete political constellation of forces in the respective country. This means that the extent and effect of the political consciousness of the various forces in society, grouped into political fronts or blocs, and the distribution of forces between them, are essential for the emergence or non-emergence as well as for the concrete manifestations of fascism; specifically: the strength or weakness of the democratic forces.

The social classes are defined by their objective position in the production process. The quantitative relationship between classes only changes in the course of and due to objective economic development. Political parties and movements, on the other hand, are summaries of political consciousness. This in turn is a factor that is constantly exposed to influence and can therefore be changed and which can develop differently given the same position in the production process (despite the primary influences emanating from this position).

Political consciousness can therefore be moved in different directions, so that the quantitative distribution of political forces can also be changed. This happens by influencing subjective consciousness using a variety of levers - economic, political and ideological.

² Fascism, which is reported to countries that are still underdeveloped by monopoly capitalism, is not in contradiction to this, its steel-driving force and main support lies with the exponents, i.e. again with the group which it would not be viable, just like the imperial capitalist military of the underdeveloping in Greece without NATO and USA would not be possible for a longer period the fascist regime.

III. The monopoly capitalist

Integration problem

The changeability of subjective consciousness is of extraordinary importance for monopoly capital. The capitalist system of power and profit can only be maintained unhindered as long as the majority of the population allows itself to be exploited and tolerates the political rule established over it by the capitalist class. The liberal capitalist society was already faced with this problem of securing power. However, the problem of securing power for monopoly capitalism has become even more acute as a result of two historical developments in particular.

The first of these objective developments is the socializing effect of capital, which becomes more and more prominent with the transition from free competition capitalism to monopoly capitalism. The inherent nature of monopoly capitalism results in an ever closer intertwining of the monopolistic economy, state and society, and increasingly requires their functional integration on the basis of the overall monopoly capitalist interest. In the course of the increasing development of state-monopolistic forms of rule and regulation, the executives, which are reliably loyal to monopoly capital (because they are directly or indirectly dependent on it), are increasingly being de facto superior over the parliaments, which are not equally reliable (because they are exposed to "external influences"). The possession of information, "expertise" and "overview" that the ministerial bureaucracy has at its disposal largely negates its supremacy over those who have this possession out parliamentarians clearly. The purely formal organizational progress towards the unity of politics, economy and society, forced by the productive forces, necessarily leads in the monopoly capitalist society to the progressive locking out of the non- and anti-monopolistic forces from the state decision-making bodies, to the development of an exclusively objective interest of the monopoly capital oriented, in

) Non-monopolistic strata and sectors understood as the workers, employees and civil servants, the agricultural, the petty bourgeois, the farmers, craftsmen, traders and merchants, the culturally active, the so-called middle class up to the non-monopolistic capitalists. — the totality of science

state policy standardized by him in terms of their content. The state apparatus is appearing more strongly and comprehensively than ever as an instrument of power for the economically most powerful. At the same time, the necessarily broad state and administrative apparatus - unlike the hierarchical command centers of corporations and monopolies - is exposed to a variety of "external influences". This in turn leads to further friction losses and new contradictions.

The second historical development is that - at the same time as the beginning of this development, which included the state in the monopoly capitalist economy as a separate factor - the working class, which had grown quantitatively and become a political force, was expanding the right to vote, which was initially limited only to wealthy classes on all d. h. forced the introduction of universal suffrage. This offers the working class as a majority, in conjunction with other non-capitalist layers, the opportunity to claim for themselves the majority principle of bourgeois democracy, which was originally conceived as an instrument for decision-making within the propertied classes. At least potentially, big capital, as a numerically extremely small minority, is at any time in danger of being outvoted by the majority.

Since then, the basic domestic political problem for monopoly capitalism has been: How can a policy that is exclusively oriented towards the objective class interests of the monopoly capitalist minority, which has to regulate ever larger areas of social life, find the subjective approval of the non-monopolistic majority that is allowed to vote and thus can be carried out within the framework of a formal democratic system of rule?

The usual answer consists in the attempt to use all available levers, taking advantage of the changeability of the subjective consciousness, in order to withdraw the subjective consciousness of the non-monopolistic layers as much as possible from the insight into their objective interests. with the aim of making the respective policies that serve monopoly capital appear to them as an expression of their own interests. What helps monopoly capital is that social reality itself

Consciousness distorted: Capitalist reality promotes, first and foremost, capitalist thinking.

The means of transferring the consciousness of the non-monopolistic layers into a state in which monopoly capitalist politics appear to them as corresponding to their own interests and they give their consent to it in an apparently voluntary act of choice are by no means just ideological means.

On the one hand there are the immediate circumstances of class society and its objective structures themselves, on the other hand there are the economic means consciously used for the purpose of influencing consciousness and the administrative social sanctions that affect the social position and standard of living of the individual. To a significant extent, however, they are also purely ideological instruments.

One of the most important ways of transferring the formations of political consciousness (which are contrary to the monopoly capitalist interests), i.e. the parties and associations, to the ground of monopoly capitalist politics is their gradual, initially often imperceptible inclusion in the practical support for this politics.

Leaders of such parties and associations. Here it is predominantly ideological levers that initiate and stabilize this integration, at least with regard to the majority of the membership. The integration and formation levers that come into effect are chauvinism, anti-communism, the partnership ideology, the individualistic advancement and employment ideology that is directed against class solidarity, and the like. They all aim to change consciousness towards solidarity with at least one or more aspects of monopoly capitalist interest politics. Based on this, adjustments will also be made to the other aspects of this policy.

However, this integration is never completely successful, and it only succeeds to a very different extent in the individual countries and also to different extents in the direction of the individual social and political groups. But it doesn't have to be completely successful in order to fulfill its purpose. It is enough if it succeeds so far that monopoly capitalist politics in the form in which it appears desirable to monopoly capital receives formal legitimacy from the majority, whatever the parties are called.

have made their content their own and are carrying them out or supporting them from the opposition bench.

There are different integration models. The diversity is determined by the different levers of integration and by the different degrees of integration, i.e. by which strata it reaches and which it does not. This in turn results in different political structures of the individual monopoly capitalist states. They can range from a parliamentary democracy with a welfare state and social liberal tone, through a wide variety of right-wing liberal to conservative shades, to authoritarian cabinet and presidential regimes, if not even to certain forms of military dictatorship.¹

But what happens if securing power through integration does not succeed?

In view of the changed (and continuing to change) international balance of power, it becomes clear that the "necessity" of monopoly-capitalist integration has to be solved on a highly explosive background. This also includes, for example, the organization of mass consent to imperialist wars.

In reality, any ideas about a complete and long-term reliable integration of all non-monopolistic layers quickly turn out to be an illusion. The inherent dynamics of monopoly capitalism with its ever-increasing contradictions leads to constant instability and endangerment of the level of integration that has temporarily been achieved. In principle, there is the possibility everywhere and at any time that the subjective reflex that the dynamic contradiction of monopoly capitalism triggers in the masses slips away from manipulative control and leads to a situation in which the non-monopolistic layers in their majority legitimize monopoly capitalist politics and with it the entourage shall fail.

There are above all two different possibilities for the disappearance of the majority base determined by monopoly capitalism. One is that the permanent and, in a certain situation, particularly increasing violation of the in

¹ The diverse possible monopoly-capitalist integration models and the various forms of monopoly-integrated and non-capital resulting from them have not yet been sufficiently social systematized.

interests of the non-monopolistic majority, even their political activity against monopoly capital, brings their subjective consciousness closer to their objective interests. As this gap closes, they become increasingly aware of their anti-monopolistic interests. In this case, their attitude, and possibly even their political activity, is directed against monopoly capital and its political representatives. (As a rule, however, such a development requires some prerequisites, which will be discussed later because they are crucial for anti-fascist politics.)

The other possibility, however, is that the subjective consciousness of these layers remains caught in the entanglements of monopoly capitalist propaganda, despite intensely felt discomfort and even protest about the given reality and their own situation. Then this dissatisfaction - which is based on objective violations of interests, the causes of which are not understood because of the bias in the monopoly capitalist ideology - leads to an aggressive turn against those who daily describe the monopoly capitalist ideology as "the enemies of the nation", as the secondary school who blamed all the grievances: "the intellectuals," the leftists," "the reds," "the communists," "the Russians," etc.

Those to whom the protest and attack of the dissatisfied are then directed are the respective external "main enemy" outside the borders and within the country are always the democratic forces (which are defined as democratic in that they represent the objective interests of the non-monopolistic majority). However, since the monopoly-capitalist state is already constantly fighting these democratic forces and is also constantly dealing with its external opponents, the desire of the non-monopolistic layers that are in unrest for radical change can only be achieved through urging after even harsher action against these internal and external "enemies" - which imperialist politics led them to believe - that is, instead of merely hindering the progressive forces and the diplomatic and economic fight against the external "enemy". Call for total annihilation and destruction. To put it more bluntly, this means more open

"Terror and war to enforce the aggressive goals of monopoly capital, which are falsely portrayed as the "will of the masses of the people that has been manipulated and determined by others".

Unease and protest turn into a fascist mentality due to consciousness distorted by monopoly capitalism. This is how fascist mass movements are created.

IV. Evolution of the main forms of fascism

If the traditional monopoly capitalist parties can no longer find a majority base and the formal democratic integration mechanisms fail, monopoly capital assumes that it is dominated by the most militant and aggressive faction, to which the other capital factions also subordinate themselves in the "overall interest", into fascism to achieve his goals.

The form in which it carries out this transition - and whether it succeeds in completing it at all - now depends on the degree and relationship to which the non-monopolistic layers have formed themselves into democratic potential on the one hand and fascist "opposition" potential on the other.

Some different options are listed here as model examples:

Possibility A: Democratic and fascist potential are approximately equally strong, and therefore include approximately equal parts of the non-monopolistic layers. In this case, monopoly capital tries to use the fascist potential for terrorist oppression and the destruction of democratic potential. If the forces are almost equally strong, the outcome of the struggle is theoretically open, but it must be taken into account that state power is usually used in favor of the legal forces.

The same applies even more in the case of a democratic potential that is smaller and inferior from the outset. Because the establishment of a fascist dictatorship is in no case

to the prerequisite of a strongly developed socialist movement that "threatens" to effectively take power. Fascism is not provoked by a socialist movement, but by the internal contradictions of monopoly capitalism and its consequences.

In the fascist party or movement, monopoly capital now has a new mass legitimacy and its new political instrument, because the fascist movement is constitutionally and fundamentally incapable of pursuing anything other than monopolistic politics. This results primarily from the fact that there is no alternative to monopoly capitalism other than socialism.

Any attempt to create a corporate state oriented towards medium-sized businesses would lead to the industrial production apparatus falling behind the level it has already achieved. However, since fascist parties and movements are fixated on increasing imperialist power, and therefore cannot use de-industrialization under any circumstances, and their constitutional anti-socialism prevents them from finding any socialist solution, they inevitably remain economic in the absence of an alternative to the monopoly capitalist economic system subordinated to ruling forces. After seizing power, their politics will be dictated exclusively by their interests. This legally follows the liquidation of those forces in the fascist movement who believed in the deceptive possibility of an "anti-monopolistic" fascism until they seized power.

Option B: The fascist movement is weak, while the democratic and socialist movement is strongly developed. In this case, destroying the democratic potential with the help of a fascist mass movement is not possible. The only thing available to monopoly capital is the military and police apparatus. So it will try to establish a fascist dictatorship on a military basis.

Option C: The democratic and socialist movement is so overwhelmingly developed and already has such strong support and influence in all groups and institutions of society (including the army) that the establishment of a fascist military dictatorship is almost impossible. In

In this case, if imperialist "help" from outside is not available, monopoly capital is forced to embark on the path of progressive political compromises to the democratic forces and thus on the path of progressive democratization of society.

V. Antifascist strategy

The most important conclusions for the strategy and practice of the anti-fascist struggle emerge from the possible forms of the emergence of fascism shown here. The strategy of preventing fascism must be based on both the danger of a fascist mass movement and that of a fascist military dictatorship. The anti-fascist struggle must therefore be carried out with a double strategic goal: firstly, to counteract the emergence of fascist mass mentality and thereby deprive monopoly capital of the possibility of establishing fascism on a mass basis, and secondly, at the same time, to cut off the path to the establishment of a fascist military dictatorship.

The prevention of the growth of fascist mass potentials must first begin with an insight into the nature of these potentials and be designed in accordance with this insight.

If fascist mass movements are recruited from the non-monopolistic layers, then this happens - as described at the beginning - primarily because of the distorted consciousness of interests, which in certain situations can be converted into a fascist mentality. The most important barrier to the emergence and growth of fascist mass movements lies in the objectification of the consciousness of interests of the non-monopolistic layers, so that they are trained as much as possible to have a consciously democratic potential and thus withdrawn from the recruitment reservoir of fascism. This means that anti-fascist education and politics must contribute to ensuring that the non-monopolistic layers recognize their objective interests and act accordingly. H. hostile to monopoly capital and fascist behavior.

There is hardly a non-monopolistic group that...

would be immune from susceptibility to fascism from the outset and would therefore be of no interest to it. There is therefore no one whose consciousness the anti-fascists could for some reason avoid fighting for.

Precisely those strata and groups who are most likely to fear that their false consciousness will turn into a fascist mentality should least be neglected as the recipients of anti-fascist work. The incompatibility of fascism with their own interests must be demonstrated to them particularly forcefully and tirelessly using concrete examples and experiences. This includes both conveying the experiences of fascism that has already taken place (the period from 1933 to 1945) and revealing the actual fascist practices and goals that are hidden behind social and national demagogic slogans.

Anyone who considers only the organized labor movement or even those who already have socialist consciousness to be the only ones to be addressed and only seeks to bring them into an anti-fascist alliance front is misunderstanding the strategic task of the anti-fascist struggle. Above all, it consists in leading those sections of the population who are susceptible to fascism out of their dangerously distorted state of consciousness, which makes them susceptible to fascism.

Precisely because the distorted consciousness is particularly deeply anchored in such strata, it would be an undertaking doomed to failure from the outset to try to bring these fascism-prone strata into anti-fascist defensiveness through socialist objectives. Their distorted consciousness is characterized by a complete lack of understanding or even hostility towards socialist forms and goals.

The necessary timely prevention of fascism does not give the anti-fascists the time to wait until these layers have fully recognized the totality of their objective interests in a long learning process. A strategy that requires people to take the third and fourth steps before the first and second would be extremely dangerous in view of the anti-fascist front that does not yet exist and is not yet secured.

In order to make it impossible for monopoly capital to make the transition to fascism through the mass movement, the first step is to make as large a section of the non-monopolistic strata as possible aware of the absolute incompatibility of the fascist dictatorship with their own interests, so that these strata are ready to prevent such a transition by all possible means.

The insight into the incompatibility of fascism with the... interests represents the first step in the process of political awareness. It initiates it long before monopoly capitalism itself becomes the object of critical thought. The path by which distorted consciousness is transformed into objective consciousness

of interest is necessarily a lengthy, multi-step process. It cannot be covered in a single jump. Such a sudden development can only occur in exceptional situations. However, because of the imponderability and the danger of turning in the opposite direction, the expectation of such a "leap" cannot be made the basis of an anti-fascist strategy. Only the general anti-fascist rallying platform makes an optimal anti-fascist defensive front of all non-monopolistic layers possible. The anti-fascist struggle must therefore be aimed at this goal of an anti-fascist front encompassing the majority of the population. It follows that its rallying platform cannot be socialist, but must be generally anti-fascist.

The confrontation with the existing fascist tendencies leads the non-monopolistic layers into practical conflicts with monopoly capital. And only by entering into these concrete disputes and having their own experiences and gaining new insights can their political consciousness develop further. In contrast, a socialist rallying platform would from the outset only unite a minority of the non-monopolistic classes into an anti-fascist battle front. The parts of the non-monopolistic classes that are still caught up in anti-socialist ideas would certainly be prevented from taking part in this struggle, if not even driven into the arms of fascism.

In a crisis-like situation in which the majority of the non-monopolistic classes, which had not previously been won over to socialism, would like to change the conditions that were perceived as intolerable, but are afraid of the path into the unknown of a new social order and are still under the influence of monopoly capitalist propaganda if she feels a downright panicked fear of socialism, if the anti-fascist left offers her only socialism as an alternative, she will rather turn to those who, on the basis of the known order, would create a "strong hand" regime for the supposed elimination of all those who directly oppress her Promise abuses.

In such a situation - and no less before, in a phase of relative political and economic stability, it is difficult enough to make the majority understand and see that and why all slogans and promises coming from the right are fundamentally fraudulent and that these are always just bait to lure the majority into a situation in which they are defenseless and subject to the ruthless violation of all their interests.

To make the non-socialist and also the initially actively anti-socialist non-monopolistic sections of the population understand - against their anti-socialist and anti-communist resentments - the necessity of working together with socialists as the basic requirement for effective prevention of fascism, because it provides effective protection against fascism Only in the joint struggle of the non-socialist and socialist forces against any fascist movement is the real difficulty and thus a core task of the anti-fascist movement contribute.

This task cannot be solved by eloquently insulting those layers who have reservations or rejection of socialism and who are also actively committed to one or another of the characteristics of the capitalist order as "fascist" or pro-fascist.

These layers can only be won over to an anti-fascist alliance by tirelessly explaining to them the contradiction between their own immediate interests and

the actual ambitions of a fascist regime until they realize that their interests are identical to the interests of the socialists in preventing fascism.

This task cannot be solved by denying or suppressing the qualitative difference between the existing non-fascist and a fascist order. The serious difference between a bourgeois democratic form of rule and a fascist form of rule by monopoly capital probably does not need to be explained in more detail based on the concrete experiences with the Hitler regime.

The socialist and communist movement had to pay the bitter lesson for having succumbed to the temptations described above for a while in the decisive historical phase of its time. Since a large proportion of such short-term tendencies are still evident today in various currents within the Left, it is recommended to study the discussion and learning process that the parties that formed the Communist International at the time concluded at their VIIIth World Congress brought.)

The detailed study of the conditions and mechanisms of the development of the subjective consciousness of the non-monopolistic layers confirms the insight, formulated programmatically for the first time by the VII World Congress of the CI, that the threat of fascism cannot be countered with the counter-solution of the socialist revolution, but only with one comprising the majority of non-monopolistic layers -and can also exploit the contradictions within monopoly capital itself and thus isolate the most aggressive circles -anti-fascist united front.)

This results in a special responsibility for that part of the social forces whose political consciousness is most advanced, i.e. has already been objectified to such an extent that they not only see fascism as a danger, but also monopoly capitalism as its source and cause.

9 s. The VIIIth World Congress of the Communist International, Mar., 1920, 1921, cf. ————

9 a. M., 1921, cf. ———— • Course, theoretical work, however, is that the question to prevent it. What is certain, ———— and practical further growth of fascist mass potential can only be successfully managed if it follows this strategic basic line.

recognized. Because his consciousness is the most developed and his insight into the context is therefore the most thorough, he usually takes the initiative and, to a certain extent, a leading role in the anti-fascist struggle.

If communists and socialists are part of the motor core of anti-fascist movements all over the world, then this is objectively due to the fact that the proletariat is the main social force in the fight against capitalism and therefore the most politically conscious parts of the proletariat - organized in socialist parties are also the most consistent opponents of fascism. This has nothing to do with a subjective claim to leadership.

But the socialists' natural leading share in the anti-fascist movements must never lead them to mistakenly view their own socialist consciousness as generally widespread and to want to elevate it to the rallying platform for the anti-fascist struggle.

VI. Development of democratic counterpower

The findings and conclusions for preventing fascist mass movements essentially also apply to preventing a fascist coup.

In principle, there is no other protection against the danger of a fascist military dictatorship established by monopoly capital than to ensure by all possible means that the consciously democratic forces in society as a whole represent a power factor that cannot be overcome. This presupposes that they are already represented strongly enough in the decisive centers of power from which such a coup can be initiated and carried out to make it impossible. The direct presence required for this in the innermost centers of power of the monopoly capitalist state, i.e. in the economy, army, government and administration - and the influence they have on them are in principle the only guarantee against the possibility of a fascist dictatorship established by means of the military and power apparatus.

In principle, the same applies here as when it comes to creating an anti-fascist consciousness in as many strata of the population as possible. The struggle to penetrate the centers of power of the formally democratic state and its economy - led with the aim of democratization - also involves a widespread anti-monopoly if this struggle is to be carried out effectively, i.e. as a mass struggle consciousness ahead.

If we assume that it is for obvious reasons
The hardest thing is always to lead the army out of loyalty to solve the ruling class or the democratic forces to lead positions in the army upper, so remain - although it is important to fight for democratic structures and democratic consciousness in the army too - there are mainly two large centers of power left, into which the primary task of the anti-fascist forces is to "penetrate": the monopoly capitalist economy in which the entrepreneurial power must be contained and broken by trade union opposition, and the organs of the monopoly capitalist state, in which the power of the monopoly capitalist parties must be contained and broken by the power of the progressive forces
. One is best achieved through the fight for the greatest possible participation in the economy, the other through an offensive confrontation with monopoly capitalism dominated parties and their politics, i.e. through struggle about public opinion, about the voters and therefore about the political force.

Taken together, this means nothing other than that the anti-fascist struggle merges with the general struggle of the democratic forces to push back the power of monopoly capital.

From this point of view, it also becomes clear that political nonsense, the fight for co-determination as to dismiss it as "reformist" or "system-stabilizing" and that to deplore the current state of the unions so much that from an anti-union position arises.

Of course, even the largest formal incursion of the unions into the decision-making bodies of big business would

Even in an anti-fascist sense, it would be of little use if the unions ultimately only used their newly won positions of power as a "factor of order" in the interests of big capital. On the other hand, however, the current formal size and relative unity of the unions is an indispensable external prerequisite for the possibility of such a thing. The collapse of power. Therefore, it cannot be a question of weakening or even destroying the existing trade union power body, but only of the necessary awareness of interests developing in this body, so that the formal power of the trade unions becomes a consciously anti-fascist and anti-monopolistic power. At the same time, this task makes it clear that the anti-fascist point of view does not disappear when the anti-fascist and anti-monopolist struggle is combined; rather, it turns out to be a necessary aspect of the anti-monopolist struggle.

Anyone who promotes a break-in of trade union power in the economy for anti-fascist motivation, i.e. for reasons of preventing fascism, is at the same time promoting anti-monopolistic democratization in general. And anyone who fights for anti-monopolistic democratization, for example for reasons of socio-political or general justice, is simultaneously counteracting the danger of fascism. This interrelationship applies to all areas of the anti-fascist and anti-monopolist struggle.

Another example of this is the fight for international detente, peacekeeping and coexistence. Its primary motive is the subjective and objective interest of the non-monopolistic classes in peace. At the same time, it is an anti-monopolistic struggle because, if carried out consistently, it is practically directed against the arms, militarization and imperialist goals of monopoly capital.

With the fight against aggressive foreign policy concepts of monopoly capital and for the inclusion of monopoly capitalist states in peacekeeping systems, the scope for any speculation on warlike solutions is significantly narrowed. To the extent that foreign policy situations no longer escalate arbitrarily and militaristic and warlike sentiments arise within the country

can no longer be produced easily, becomes the monopoly capital also the transition to fascist forms of rule sword. Both points of view reflect the objective anti fascist and anti-monopoly content of peace fight. Both aspects cannot be separated the struggle for increasing political power of the democracy forces at all levels of the state, economy and society , i.e. from the fight for democratic progress in order to stabilize the path to securing

peace. The question could now be asked: Why all the talk about a specifically anti-fascist struggle if everything comes together in the end? Why the distinctions between anti-fascist, anti-monopoly and socialist, i.e. fundamentally anti-capitalist struggle - when the anti-fascist struggle ultimately only albert under a special aspect, as anti-monopolistic Struggle and the socialist-taking into account the con created situation - today also only as anti-monopolistic A fight can be waged if everything comes to an end on the same current strategic line?

However, such a question does not come from practice , but from categorizing thinking. In practice, what belongs together and objectively forms a unity unfolds into its various aspects. The individual non-monopolistic layers do not have a uniform awareness of their objective overall interests because in practice there are numerous gradations of the subjective state of consciousness.

If it were otherwise, then the union and cohesion of all non-monopolistic layers would already be achieved , the subjective consciousness would correspond to the objective interests and possibilities - and the fascist danger would already be overcome. But we have to get there first. The realistic (objectified) awareness of interests to be striven for must not be confused with the current initial awareness.

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In this issue:

In the summer of 1971, a working conference of the working groups of young anti-fascists dealt with questions of the emergence and prevention of fascism. The lectures given there by Kurt Gossweiler (GDR) and Reinhard Oeltz (FRG) form the main content of this issue in an edited

Kurt Gossweiler points out the function of fascism as an instrument of power for finance and monopoly capital.

The Marburg political scientist himself comments on the debate with Reinhard Kühnl in this presentation. In his presentation "How do you fight fascism?" which forms the basis for the article published here, Reinhard Oeltz provided theses on anti-fascist politics. Two core sentences from this can also serve as the motto of this

Preventive, i.e. H. effective in a timely manner
Fighting fascism must have the mechanisms know, on the basis of which the monopoly capitalist society takes one form as well as the other of fascism emerges from itself in order to become one to achieve a realistic counter-strategy.

The anti-fascist struggle must therefore be directed towards the goal of an anti-fascist front that includes the majority of the population. By publishing this material, the VVNR Association of Antifascists wants to contribute to the discussion of this topic. The content of the individual contributions does not always correspond to the opinion of the editors.

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RODERBERG-VERLAG FRANKFURT
SCHUMANNSTRASSE 56 TEL. 779084